

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2196  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020**

**INCREASE IN SUICIDES**

**2196. SHRIMATI KIRRON KHER:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there has been an increase in the number of people committing suicide in the past few months and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether more people are facing mental health problems because of the pandemic situation; and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has issued guidelines to all the State/UTs to provide mental healthcare to all the people affected by the pandemic, including setting up of telephone helplines, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to provide better access to mental healthcare to the affected people?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND  
FAMILY WELFARE  
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

- (a) to (c): The Government has not conducted any study to assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on suicide or mental health of the population. However, realizing the impact that COVID-19 may have on the mental health of the people, the Government has taken a number of initiatives to provide psychosocial support during COVID-19. These initiatives include:
- (i) Setting up of a 24/7 helpline to provide psychosocial support, by mental health professionals, to the entire affected population, divided into different target groups viz children, adult, elderly, women and healthcare workers.
  - (ii) Issuance of guidelines/ advisories on management of mental health issues, catering to different segments of the society.
  - (iii) Advocacy through various media platforms in the form of creative and audio-visual materials on managing stress and anxiety, and promoting an environment of support and care for all.
  - (iv) Issuance of detailed guidelines by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru- "Mental Health in the times of COVID-19 Pandemic - Guidance for General Medical and Specialized Mental Health Care Settings".

(v) All the guidelines, advisories and advocacy material can be accessed on Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website under “Behavioural Health – Psychosocial helpline” (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>).

(vi) Online capacity building of health workers by NIMHANS in providing psychosocial support and training through (iGOT)-Diksha platform.

(d): To address the burden of mental disorders, the Government of India is implementing the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP). The Government is supporting implementation of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) under NMHP in 692 districts of the country with the objectives to:

- (i) Provide suicide prevention services, work place stress management, life skills training and counselling in schools and colleges.
- (ii) Provide mental health services including prevention, promotion and long-term continuing care at different levels of district healthcare delivery system.
- (iii) Augment institutional capacity in terms of infrastructure, equipment and human resource for mental healthcare.
- (iv) Promote community awareness and participation in the delivery of mental healthcare services.